

S O U T H W O L D .

J a n u a r y 1896.

*Copy of Annual Medical Report to
The Southwold Sanitary Authority*

Gentlemen.,

I have the honour to lay before you my Medical Report for the year ending December 31st.1895.

I was able to speak favourably of the condition of the town in my last report; still more favourably can I refer to it now. We have lost by death,during 1895,only 24 Residents and the death-rate is therefore proportionately low. The birth-rate is up to the average. There was a return of Influenza during the early part of the year but it was of short duration; one patient succumbed to it. There was also a short epidemic of Whooping Cough in January and February necessitating temporary closure of the Schools. Beyond this there has been no serious illness and we have had almost a clean bill of health as regards the principal infectious diseases,only one having been notified - a fatal case of membranous croup.

The past year has witnessed the successful completion of a good drainage scheme and a fair number of houses already connected with the main sewer. The system is of course new and naturally it placed Southwold at a temporary disadvantage at first,in that it necessitated

the overturning of a considerable quantity of saturated soil both in laying down the system and also in closing up a large number of cesspools and taking up their drains, the result being increased exhalation of impure gases and temporary pollution of the surroundings. This will doubtless account for the tale of "sorethroat" which has been rather widely circulated by some of our summer visitors. One cannot but allow that residence in the midst of sewer gas obtains a certain immunity from its ill effects, consequently it may be assumed that visitors coming fresh into it would be more liable to be affected by the temporary derangement of things.

I have no doubt Southwold will now revert to its old form, it is well known as an exceptionally healthy place and nothing can exceed the energy and activity of its present Sanitary Authority, who are endeavouring to remedy every defect, perfecting in every possible way the drainage system, examining and analysing the waters, and by whose orders I am now engaged on a house to house visitation in order to bring to light every abuse and shortcoming respecting the sanitary condition of the town. This is as it should be and is especially necessary now at a time when Southwold is increasing so rapidly.

BIRTH-RATE.

The number of births registered in 1895 was 57 or 20.4 per 1000. Males 36, Females 21. Three of these were illegitimate. The birth-rate maintains a fairly level standard, 56 being the average of the last 10 years.

DEATH-RATE.

The actual number of deaths during the year stands at 31 or 11.0 per 1000. Of this number however 7 were strangers, 4 males 3 females.

As far as can be ascertained no resident has died outside the district, so that the corrected death-rate of the resident population is 24 or 8.5 per 1000. an extraordinarily low one. Males 12, Females 12. The following table will show the deaths at the different ages:-

Deaths under	1 year	=	8
.. at	1 .. and under	5 years	= 0
.. ..	5	15 ..	= 2
.. ..	15	25 ..	= 1
.. ..	25	65 ..	= 8
.. ..	65 .. and upwards		= 12
Total			<u>31.</u>

There were 8 deaths under 1 year and 18 over 50, only 5 therefore between 1 and 50 years and of this number 4 were strangers.

CAUSES OF DEATH classified as required by the Local Government Board.

Diseases.	Under 5.	Over 5.	Diseases	Under 5.	Over 5.
Small Pox	0	0	Measles	0	0
Scarlatina	0	0	Whooping Cough	0	0
Diphtheria	0	0	Dysentery	1 (stranger)	0
Membranous Croup	1	0	Rheumatic Fever	0	0
Fevers	0	0	Phthisis	0	2
Cholera	0	0	Bronchitis, Pneumonia	1	3 (1 stranger)
Erysipelas	0	0	Heart Disease	0	1
Influenza	0	1	All other diseases	6 (2 strangers)	15 (3 strangers)

All other diseases include old age and decay 4. Cerebral diseases 7. Congenital debility 4. Convulsions 2. Cancer 2. Peritonitis 1. Deaths by drowning 2, (strangers).

NOTIFICATION OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

This Act has been in force in the Borough since July 1890, Measles and Whooping Cough not being included. Only one case has been notified during the year, viz:- of Membranous Croup, which proved fatal.

WATER SUPPLY.

The Town is supplied largely by the mains of the Water Works Company but most of the Cottage property derives its supply from private wells. Many of these are without covering, a defect which ought to be remedied. As the water question is now under the special consideration of the Sanitary Authority, who are actively engaged in examining various waters in order to eliminate any possible bad supply, I will not comment further upon it.

SANITARY INSPECTION.

The usual general inspection of the district has been well carried out during the past year. Grievances have been redressed and nuisances abated where existing, the whole work having been carefully and energetically administered by the Sanitary Inspector. No recourse to legal proceedings has been necessary.

DRAINAGE.

The "International" system of drainage was completed in this Town in the early part of the year. Only a few connections from houses were possible at first after it was declared open, owing to the advent of the visitors' season when such work had to cease, but since October the work has been recommenced and is being rapidly pushed on. There is every

reason to believe that the drainage will prove a success and a boon to the town, as yet with comparatively so small a number of connections it is not possible to judge of its working.

EXCREMENT.

All excrement from cesspools is carted away out of the town. That remaining from the drainage works after precipitation-the sludge-has hitherto been trenched and dug into the ground near the filter beds, but as that means of disposal has not proved satisfactory, the Sanitary Authority are considering the advisability either of carting it also away or of sludge pressing.

MEANS OF SANITARY IMPROVEMENT NEEDED.

DUSTBINS:- As in former reports I beg again to draw the attention of the Sanitary Authority to the advisability of removing the huge fixed brick dustbins of which so many are to be found about the town and in which accumulate large masses of filthy putrescent matter, this being allowed to remain for long periods unprovided with any covering. Again I urge that the retention of large quantities of organic and other offensive matter in the midst of dwellings is most objectionable and opposed to all rules of sanitation.

MORTUARY:- As soon as other Sanitary matters of more pressing importance have been disposed of I beg the Sanitary Authority will consider the question of providing a Mortuary and Post-mortem Room.

OVERCROWDING:- I beg to draw the attention of the Sanitary Authority to the evil of overcrowding, which undoubtedly exists in certain cottages, especially in Victoria Street. I noticed it particularly when engaged in a



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case taken up by the Inspector of the Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Children during the past year.

DISUSED WELLS:- Quite recently my attention has been drawn to certain wells, formerly used for drinking purposes but which have fallen into disuse for such purpose and are now the convenient receptacles for all kinds of filth and rubbish. Wells drain wide areas of soil and it can easily happen that other drinking wells, in the vicinity of these disused wells and lying in the same strata, may become polluted by the putrescent organic impurities contained in these latter. I urge therefore the advisability of having all such disused wells filled up without delay.

METEROLOGICAL DATA.

I regret to say that I am unable in this report to give the usual data, owing to a misfortune, they are not available. The only data kept at the Sailors' Room are the Maximum Temperatures and they cannot be looked upon as reliable, for several are missing altogether.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

A. C. Herbert

Med. Offr. H. M. S. "HMS"

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